

Taylor O. H.

MEDICAL REFORM

AND THE

PRESENT SYSTEM OF MEDICAL INSTRUCTION.

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**AN ADDRESS**

**DELIVERED AT THE SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING**

**OF THE**

**New Jersey Medical Society,**

**HELD AT CAMDEN, NOV. 13, 1849.**

**BY**

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**ONE OF THE VICE PRESIDENTS**

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## ADDRESS.

*Gentlemen, Fellows, and Members of the Medical Society of New Jersey*,—The revolution of another semi-annual term, has once more brought about the assemblage of the representatives of our profession, from all parts of the commonwealth of New Jersey; and in accordance with time-honored custom, and your partial—I fear, too partial selection, it becomes my duty to address you, at the commencement of our deliberations, on this occasion.

In looking around for a suitable subject upon which to engage the attention, my mind was naturally directed in the first place, to the more recent and novel forms of disease, and the improvements, or proposed improvements in therapeutics, which have been originated since our last semi-annual convocation; but a little reflection convinced me, that subjects of this nature which will necessarily be discussed more fully in the elaborate reports from the several district committees, are more properly adapted to the regular monograph, or treatise, in an established journal, than to the ephemeral lecture with which it has become customary to preface our labours.

It seems more consistent with the true intention of such addresses, that they should offer for the consideration of the Society plans of practical utility, and measures, calculated to uphold the dignity, and promote the usefulness of the medical profession, the object and chief end of our foundation; than mere detailed narratives or even scientific arguments, such as may be properly introduced at any stage of our proceedings; and in accordance with this impression, I propose to offer some suggestions, calling for important and definite action on the part of the Society.

The rapid increase of empiricism, and the consequent extension of human suffering, disease, and death, during the last few years, have awakened much anxiety on the part of the profession, and



given origin to many and learned disquisitions upon the *causes of the evil*, though rare indeed have been the measures of practical reform, suggested by the able minds engaged in the investigation.

To protect the community of New Jersey from the consequences of gross ignorance, unprincipled cupidity, and insolent assumption, in the profession of medicine; the charter of the Medical Society of New Jersey, was originally granted, and in furtherance of the same laudable object, its provisions have been modified from time to time, by the legislature, at our request.—We have received from that instrument, many and singular powers, in contrast with that of other states of our union; and we have necessarily become *charged* with delicate trusts and important duties. The public has extended to us, privileges of important value, in consideration of *our pleûge* to protect it from the dangers of empiricism and incompetence. The public has performed its portion of the contract faithfully. Have we been equally faithful in the moral and conscientious discharge of our part of the common obligation? In attempting a reply to this most serious question, it becomes requisite for me to enter into an analysis of the more important rights and duties conferred and imposed upon us by the sovereign authority of the state; and we find one great end and purpose of our creation, as a body of guardians of the public weal, tersely and briefly summed up in the fourteenth section of the act of incorporation, which commences with this significant provision:—"And be it enacted, That this act shall be so construed as to prevent all irregular bred pretenders to the healing art, under the names or titles of practical Botanists, Root, or Indian Doctors, or any other name or title, involving quackery of any species, from practising their deceptions, and imposing upon the ignorance and credulity of their fellow citizens," &c. This section concludes with the proper reference to the pains, penalties, and processes, by means of which, it is prescribed that empiricism in New Jersey, *shall* be exterminated by this Society; and no one will pretend that these means are in any marked degree deficient or defective. By the provision of the twelfth section, it is made, not the privilege, but the *legal*

*duty* of the district societies, to prosecute the delinquent in every instance of infraction of the law.

Permit me now, to inquire, to what extent this imposed legal duty has been performed by these district societies? Are there no irregular bred practitioners, practical Botanists, or Indian Doctors, ungraduated Homœopathists, Thompsonians, or Water Doctors, at present imposing upon the ignorance and credulity of their fellow citizens, within the immediate cognizance of the members of our district societies, and who are permitted to do so with impunity, and in defiance of the law of the land, through our culpable supineness?

The late President of our Society, in his *learned* and *eloquent address*, delivered at our last stated meeting, congratulated the profession upon the rapidly increasing confidence of the community of New Jersey in the counsel and skill of the regularly educated practitioner, and the subsequent decline of the evils of empiricism—but has he attributed this portrait to the happy and important advantages derived from the proper and legal exercise of our duties? the *redemption* of our *pledges* in accepting from the state our chartered rights? Alas, no! The community has grown wiser, and endued with power to discriminate between what is *true*, and what is *false*, and hence it is, that the diffusion of a superior grade of education, has enabled an increasing number of our fellow citizens to distinguish between true and false pretension. The *people*, it may be truly declared, have commenced to guard themselves, in matters relative to *health* and *life*, and thus they are performing for us, those very functions which our corporate existence was created to fulfil.

Gentlemen—I should be false to you and to myself in permitting a spirit of flattery or self-laudation to check the expression of this serious and important opinion. So long as a single ungraduated empiric is permitted to endanger with impunity, the health and lives of the citizens of New Jersey, in contravention of the laws of which we are the regular constituted guardians, so long the Medical Society of the State must be adjudged false to its trusts, and guilty of a breach of our contract with the state.

If, then, this opinion be correct, is it not incumbent upon us, to enter upon an investigation of the causes, and extent of our dereliction of duty in relation to a subject in which our honor is directly concerned, as members of a corporation that is but a creature of the law and a servant of the public? Policy, as well as principle, obviously demands that we should act promptly and efficiently. The talented lecturer, who so recently addressed you, forewarns those of our profession, who, neglecting the opportunities which surround them, fail to become solidly grounded in the art of healing, or suffer themselves to fall in the rear of the march of our science, that the public is becoming momentarily more capable of estimating the distinction between the intelligent, well instructed, and accomplished practitioner; and the physician who rests satisfied with adventitious means of success, and the comparatively slender amount of knowledge deemed requisite to warrant a commencement in professional life. If, then, our deficiencies in technical matters are thus open to popular criticism, how can we safely calculate upon the forbearance of the people, under a much more obvious neglect of the plain letter of laws, enacted at our request—Laws, from which we have derived, and are still enjoying, the full measure of benefit. But the civic duties of the New Jersey Medical Society are not restricted to the extinction of extra professional quackery, and incompetence. Where is the respectable practitioner, whose indignation has slept, while witnessing the rapid deterioration of medical instruction, and the constant diminution of the requisites of the degree of the Doctorate, within the last twenty years?

Schools have been multiplied to an unprecedented extent, by the numerous sovereignties of the United States, and over these schools preside, not the *profession itself*, whose interests are most *immediately involved*—not the people, speaking through the government, who might probably endeavor, however blindly, to legislate for the protection of their own health and lives—but nominally, at least, certain associations of men, of visible standing in the community, elevated by their wealth and political influence, and it may be, a certain share of literary acquirements—men,



who, nevertheless, are as ignorant as the general public, of the science in which they are called upon to determine the awards of merit. To men of this class, residing for the most part at the principal centres of intelligence, where their liability to injure life or limb, from the abuse of their high functions by the licensing of the unworthy or incompetent, is reduced to almost a nullity, we look for the legal certificates of medical ability, in the shape of a diploma.

Let us look a little deeper into the operations of this system. It is not to be supposed that men so well instructed as those who constitute our Board of Collegiate Trustees, would undertake to determine for themselves, the qualifications of aspirants for medical honors, while conscious of their own profound ignorance of the recondite principles of medical science; and we find that they have not in any instance assumed such responsibility. They have invariably made over the duty of examining candidates to those who are alone capable of performing that all-important task; those who are practically familiar with the art of healing. In this respect the dictates of common sense and propriety have been apparently obeyed. But to what class of practitioners has the management of examinations been referred? Invariable to those, who are actually engaged in teaching, and who are therefore directly interested, not in extending the strongest guardianship over the health and lives of the community, but in swelling the proportional number of graduates annually sent forth from their own particular schools—for who is not fully aware that the reputation of easy examinations, and slender requirements, both in money and science, as preparations for the Doctorate, constitutes the highest charm of a Medical School in the eyes of the trembling neophyte, who seeks to place his foot on the first round of the professional ladder? What intelligent practitioner needs to be informed that the popularity and reputation of a college are measured in the minds of the uninitiated public by the numbers of its class, and that those numbers are dependent, primarily and mainly, on the supposed lightness of examination and the facility of graduation?

The only rational and worthy object of the institution of the Medical Diploma, is the protection of the public from the results of ignorant pretension in our divine art—yet there exists not in the United States a single independent ordeal of medical merit.

In every School, the first preliminary question addressed to the candidate, is not, *What do you know?* but *Where have you studied?* The second, is not, *How long have you been reading and observing?* but, *Whose ticket have you taken?* Now, there is no Esculapian cave, like that of Delphos, from which, by the peculiar favor of Apollo, the oracles of our art are uttered. Whence, then, arises this universal system of constantly multiplying monopolies, in each of which the student, in order to enjoy the teachings of the *truly wise* in one or many departments of the Science, must be content to forego superior opportunities in other departments, because a Board of unprofessional Trustees have failed in securing the best talent, in every department for its own particular faculty?

Why is the candidate, who has expended the largest amount of time and money, in obtaining the best instruction, refused the right to claim a certificate of his qualifications, because, instead of studying exclusively in one or two collegiate establishments, he has chosen the best teachers from among all within his reach?

No disinterested observer will attempt to *deny*, that the existing system of exclusiveness, which confers the medical examinations to the holders of a certain ticket of matriculation, and obliges it to be conducted by and before those who have a direct and heavy interest in fulfilling the wishes of the candidate, wisely or unwisely, has degraded the teaching of medicine, from the loftiest occupation in the noblest of sciences, into a mere trade, to be conducted upon mercantile principles. That rivalry between schools which should lead to constant efforts to elevate the character of medical instruction, and to raise the moral value of the diploma, as a certificate, has been perverted, under the influence of this mistaken system, to results, precisely opposite.

Where the reputation of the school, and the emoluments of the professors are made to depend, not on the quality of the instruc-



tion, but directly upon the number of the matriculants, and the relative proportion of graduates, it would be asking too much of human nature to expect the dignity and usefulness of the profession to be advanced, or even *upheld*, in the face of a vigorous, and constantly increasing competition; and it cannot be a matter of surprise, nor will the fact be denied, that the value of the medical diploma is, and for years has been, depreciating, both in public and professional estimation.

Least any one should charge me with dwelling too strongly upon this point, I will quote, as a series of public efforts to correct this acknowledged evil, a resolution offered by Dr. Bartlett, at a late meeting of the American Medical Association, at New York, and referred by that body to an able Committee—

*“Resolved, That the union of the business of teaching and licensing, in the same hands, is wrong in principle and liable to great abuse in practice. Instead of conferring the right to license on Medical Colleges, and State and County Medical Societies, it should be restricted to one board in each State, composed, in fair proportions, of representatives from its Medical Colleges and the profession at large; and the pay for whose services as examiners should, in no degree, depend upon the number licensed by them.”*

I shall not attempt to occupy your time and attention with a critical analysis of the remedial measures advocated in this resolution. I have quoted it, merely in proof of the wide spread acknowledgement of the error of principle upon which the present system of medical instruction has been founded and hitherto conducted; and it was no doubt owing to a clear appreciation of the inevitable consequences of this system, that the legislature of New Jersey imposed upon this Society, the duty of overlooking with care and watchfulness, the simple, or mere certificate of a collegiate diploma, and discreetly, for the dignity of the profession, directed that even the graduates of other States should be subjected to an *impartial examination* by a board of our appointment, who were indifferent to personal interest, or private advantage, before being admitted to the legal privileges and immunities of a regularly initiated practitioner of this State. Let me then again solicit the question, how far the New Jersey Medical So-

ciety has, with integrity and moral rectitude, complied with its obligations to the public in this respect? Those amongst you who have been called upon to fulfil the delicate duties of the examiner, are painfully aware that while the legal tests of ability have been rendered gradually less and less severe, partly through a misplaced, or at least, a very questionable lenity; and partly, it may be, from the apparent necessity of the case, arising from the deterioration of elementary teaching. The number of instances in which our boards are compelled, unwillingly, to reject even the graduate applicant, in consequence of ignorance, too gross, and palpable, for concealment, is sufficient most amply to establish the wisdom of the legislative restriction and the truthfulness of the unpleasant portrait, I have been compelled to represent before you.

Will any conscientious medical practitioner, presume to condemn the laws by which we have been empowered, and directed to guard the citizens of New Jersey against the fictitious pretensions of graduates, who, upon our examinations, have disclosed before our official boards, such peculiar qualifications as these?—

#### EXAMPLE, NO. I.

*Examiner*—What are those medicines called, which increase, or promote the discharge from the bronchial tubes?

*Candidate*—That was the very part I intended to study before examination.

*Examiner*—What then do you mean by an expectorant?

*Candidate*—I can't exactly tell.

*Examiner*—Well, do you prescribe expectorants in your practice?

*Candidate*—Yes, Sir, by all means.

*Examiner*—Now, as you have been in practice for several months, allow me to inquire what is your favorite expectorant?

*Candidate*—*Jayne's Expectorant*—and I use no other, because it is the best.

*Examiner*—Can you tell me the constituents of *Jayne's Expectorant*?

*Candidate*—No, Sir. *He will not tell that.*

#### EXAMPLE, NO. II.

This young graduate came forward, with the strongest letters of recommendation from the highly distinguished professors of his school, as one who had won his medical honors, with unusual eclat.

*Examiner*—What is the synonym of calomel?

*Candidate*—I can't say, exactly.

*Examiner*—How would you write a prescription for *calomel*, and give me the full technical term?

*Candidate*—Hyd: Chlo: Mit:

Upon further examination, this candidate insisted, that this practical contraction was the proper chemical title of the drug, in its entire length, and breadth, and gave ample evidence of his conviction, that all similar contractions employed by pharmacutists, were equally complete. Numerous other questions were answered by him, with a degree of ignorance not less plainly manifest.

#### EXAMPLE NO. III.

A graduate not less strongly recommended, under examination for Obstetrics—

*Examiner*—What do you mean by an hour-glass contraction?

The candidate appeared embarrassed, and was unable to answer. The test was therefore applied in a different form, in order to give him time for reflection.

*Examiner*—Well, then, Sir, what would you do in a case of hour-glass contraction?

*Candidate*—*I would pass a wire.*

Gentlemen, were I disposed to cite some of the replies of graduated candidates, before our Board of Examiners, to questions in relation to the dozes, and reagents of the more active medicinal poisons, every tendency to satire, would be lost in genuine terror, for the safety of human life, when entrusted to the guardianship of such practitioners; but evidence has been already



quoted, which may well cause us to frown with indignation, while blushing with shame and trembling anxiety, at these natural results of the existing condition of medical instruction, and the fearful negligence of those, who stand as sentinels before the portals of professional life. It is not my object to dwell censoriously upon the conduct of others, but simply to direct your attention to the manner in which our own legal duties have been fulfilled.

In consideration of the rights and advantages, bestowed upon us by *law*, we are required, by those laws, to protect the community of New Jersey against the evil consequences of such gross ignorance, and palpable incompetence, as I have just exposed. It is for this purpose, and no other, that our charter prohibits even the regular graduate from commencing the practice of Physic or Surgery, within this state, (except in cases of consultation,) until he shall have passed an examination and received a diploma from the Medical Society of New Jersey—that charter, exacting at the same time, heavy penalties for all breeches of this regulation, and making it expressly the duty of the district societies, in every county where such penalty shall be incurred, to prosecute for the same.

Fellows, and fellow members, have we fulfilled our portion of this contract with the State? Have we so prosecuted in every instance, as by the acceptance of our charter, we stand virtually pledged to do? Plain truth demands the acknowledgment, that more than one of those young graduates, whose replies to the simple questions of the examiners just stated, and were of course refused the license of this Society, though bearing the diplomas of schools of the *very highest reputation*, are now actually practising upon the ignorance and credulity of their fellow citizens, *here*, in our *very midst*, and are so permitted to do, in defiance of the laws of the State, and in the face of our legal obligation to abate the evil.

The learned gentleman, to whose address I have more than once alluded, compliments the community, and perhaps not unjustly, upon its growing capacity to *scrutinize* the attainments of

medical practitioners, and remarks that "if they be men of superficial attainments, and undisciplined understanding, the profession, no less than themselves, will suffer from the *scrutiny*."—On the other hand, when the rapid, and seemingly *brilliant* career of dashing pretension, rendered fearless by the very want of knowledge, is made a subject of sensorious comment amongst us, nothing is more common than the reply, that this apparent success, is but a transient evil—that, sooner or later, *merit* is sure to find its proper level; and hence the removal of such evils may be safely entrusted to the public itself, without involving the profession, in the vain and endless task of endeavoring to restrain the inevitable and constantly recurring consequences of a system, over which it cannot exercise control.

This reasoning is as plausible, as it is convenient, to men, whose daily avocations are painfully engrossing, and whose efforts for the public weal are almost invariably attributed to selfish and unworthy motives. It is true, that the principles of the science of life begin to be more widely discussed in popular lectures, and that class books on the subject, are rapidly becoming common in our academies, and elementary schools; nor will any intelligent practitioner venture to impugn the opinion of the celebrated Rush, who, in one of his introductory lectures, contends that the general diffusion of such knowledge, is the most powerful antidote to both professional and unprofessional empiricism, provided the teacher be fitted for his office. But will it be pretended that the ignorance and credulity of our fellow citizens, have been already so far enlightened, and removed by the peripatetic lectures, on the nature of man, and the compilers of school books on physiology, that the necessity, which led to our foundation, has passed away? If so—why do we not declare our occupation gone? Why does our charter still burden the records of the State? Why do we not at once relinquish to the Legislature, the immunities conferred upon us, in consideration of the guardianship over the public health, which we have so solemnly agreed to exercise?

There is an ethical question involved in these considerations, which calls for serious reflection on the part of the society—does

it not call for immediate action also? Of what avail it is, that we reject the incompetent candidate for our license, when he appears before the *confidential*, and almost secret tribunal of a board of examiners, if in defiance of law and duty, we suffer him the next day, to commence the very career, which our examination was instituted to prevent? If we permit him to pursue the practice of a profession, in which such ignorance inevitably leads to suffering, disease, and death, how shall we rebut the charge of countenancing *homicide*, by the mere pretext, that in time, *such merit*, will be duly weighed by the discerning public?

Gentlemen, I fear this discernment of the public is overstrained. While some of the best talent of the country has been occasionally employed in popular lectureship, upon subjects, calculated to render the uninitiated, more cautious in listening to the claims of unblushing pretenders to the healing art—while some few men of real ability, and moral worth, have written works calculated to infuse into the minds of the young, a little genuine knowledge, of the first principles of Physiology and Hygiene, the country has been flooded with the open, or secret agents of the worst of acknowledged empyrics—male and female professors of crude, and dangerous absurdities—distributing false facts, false theories, false dogmas, and in many instances, catering even to the vicious appetites of their auditors, for the sake of spurious popularity. The employees of a host of publishers of volumes, miscalled cheap, are perpetually travelling from city to city—from village to village, besieging the doors of every academy, and invading every school-house, with the offer of their ill concocted compilations—rude trophies of the scissors.

I have taken some pains to ascertain, from competent authority, the relative success of these imposters upon the ignorance, and credulity, of *even our learned fellow-citizens*, whose avocations in life have not induced them to pursue the regular study of the divine art, in healing, and have reason to believe, that where one individual in the community is found to possess that happy discrimination which enables him to recognize, and satisfy his thirst from the pure wells of physiological knowledge, there are ten,



who rest content with poisonous draughts from the stagnant moccasins of charlatancy and empiricism.

How then can professional merit find its proper level, under the test of public scrutiny? Look around you and declare in what instances the medical practitioner has been liberally rewarded by the proceeds of his practice—that there are a few men of decided wealth, among the ornaments of our science, is not to be denied—but whence was that wealth obtained? Some are rich by marriage—some by hereditary fortune, or paternal estate—some perhaps by speculation—but who are the *millionaires* of the Esculapian art? In reply—we would respond to the truth, that, they are the venders of Catholicons, Panacea's, Expectorants, and Indian specifics—the manipulators in infinitesimal nonentities and wet sheets. Do these men find their level? When they have accumulated fortune, does the public discrimination at length put limits to the growing mass? It may be said, that this law of ultimate equilibrium, is only applicable within the ranks of the profession; but human nature is not modified for the accommodation of costs, and experience teaches, that the diploma is no talisman, endued with mystic power, to relieve the blindness of the public—no touch stone, by which to test the real metal, or expose the base alloy.

If, then, merit in our profession, tends ultimately to find its level, its movements through the adhesive mass of charlatancy, by which it is surmounted and surrounded, is so slow and gradual, that death usually arrives in the midst of the precipitation, leaving pretension still paramount, and consigning the family of modest merit to the sympathy and kindness of its fellows, who have built their faith upon this popular but illegitimate law.

Let us, then, discard an unbecoming apology for our neglect, in leaving unperformed an imperative, though disagreeable duty. Let the society take immediate measures to prevent their rejected candidates from practising upon the ignorance and credulity of their fellow-citizens, at once, or request the Legislature to relieve us from the cumbersome machinery of a board of examiners, to

test qualifications, which, when found and declared deficient, are still imposed upon the public under our tacit sanction.

Allow me, once more, to invoke your earnest attention to the question, how far our action under the existing charter of the New Jersey Medical Society, comports with the moral and legal obligations, and with the proper *dignity* of a professional body, endowed by their confiding countrymen, and who, under a persuasion of our fidelity, have committed to us, important trusts and high responsibilities.

So much for the duties enjoined upon us by the charter. But that instrument confers optional powers, as well as important privileges and essential obligations.

In the course of my remarks, on the errors of the existing system of medical instruction, I made allusion to the opinion entertained by many, that the root of these errors lies entirely beyond our reach—that we are powerless in attempting to control or modify the system of medical instruction. Before closing these remarks, I will ask the attention of the society to a few suggestions on *this* point.

The same wise forethought, which induced the Legislature to protect, by means of the New Jersey medical license system, the ignorance and credulity of the public, against the impositions of incompetence, armed with the diploma, or not, appears also, to have engendered the anticipation of a period when the medical diploma, as uttered under the sanction of the various faculties, established on the ancient plan, would cease to be a certificate of merit—when the multitude of young graduates poured forth from schools, in which the period, or quality, of preliminary study has been, and still continues to be curtailed, in practice, if not in theory, might fail to supply the wants of the public with a sufficient number of real competent physicians. What other consideration could have persuaded the Assembly of our State, to extend to us the all-important privilege conferred in the fifth section of our charter?

“And be it enacted, That the Medical Society of New Jersey, (including both fellows and delegates) are hereby authorized to

institute regulations, which shall again be approved by a majority of the whole number of fellows, acting separately, according to which regulations the said Medical Society of New Jersey, *may* confer the degree of Doctor of Medicine."

Thus it appears, that although we are not required, *we are permitted* to extend to the profession of our choice and our affections, a portion of that guardianship, which it is made our legal duty to exert over the health of the community at large.

If we are not empowered to correct the abuses of the existing system of medical instruction, we are at least allowed to institute another and a better plan, by which the *requisites* for *graduation* shall be re-elevated to a standard of respectability, commensurate with the dignity and vast importance of our Heaven-born art.

We have it wholly and entirely within our power, to establish a diploma which *shall be a test of merit*, because it would emanate from a body fully competent to determine the question of medical ability. A body having no interest in the results of the examination, and no stake, in point of reputation, involved in the rejection of a pupil.

The want of such a model is acknowledged on every hand.—It was shown in the abortive attempt to act upon the charter of the Medical College of Philadelphia, in 1836. It is proved by the action of numerous medical bodies, since that time, in various parts of the United States. It re-appears in the resolution of Dr. Bartlett, before the American Convention, at New York.—Why, then, have so many efforts to palliate evils that are universally condemned, proved unavailing, and in every instance futile?

The answer is as obvious as the fact. The members of the several faculties of teachers, are among the most learned, the ablest, and most influential men, whose genius does honor and dignity to our art. They are properly put forward, and naturally assume controlling stations, in all general movements of the medical profession. They have made heavy investments in the business of teaching, and those investments are secured to them by legal rights, really or seemingly exclusive. Such faculties exist



in almost all the larger States, and everywhere the immediate teachers of our professional youth are made the immediate arbiters of their professional honors.

Can it be expected of human nature, that reforms which would sap the very foundation of these rights—lessen perhaps, the value of investments, and leave hard-earned *distinction* to maintain itself by ceaseless struggles with aspiring merit, should receive the unreserved sanction of the very holders of such valuable privileges? Can we with reason, ask the valuable professor to grant his aid in removing the well-cushioned arms from the professional chair, by throwing open the green room to every truly well educated candidate, without inspecting his *matriculation ticket*—when we find by *our examinations*, how readily the incompetent are permitted to pass unscathed, that terrible ordeal by the aid of a small pasteboard talisman, endorsed with the image of the appropriate school, and superscribed to by the appropriate Dean?

Wherever the tocsin of radical reform in the teaching of medicine has been sounded, there the hopes of the sanguine have been crushed, and energies of the cautious, enervated by alarm, through the natural influences of those who certainly cannot be regarded as totally disinterested judges of the propriety of measures, having direct influence on their emoluments and fame.

But New Jersey has no medical school. No vested rights, as yet, exist in the hands of teachers. No ancient system, honored alike in its use and its abuse, interferes with the calm deliberation of disinterested men upon the wants of the professional public, and the means of restoring and elevating the proper dignity, of the noblest and most liberal of sciences. *Here then*, if any where, we might cherish the hope, for the foundation of a medical school, in which the requisites for graduation, might be placed upon a proper basis. Where the teacher should be forever cut off from the dangerous privilege of sitting in judgment, upon the results of his own mental labors. Where the accomplished candidate, might be secure of justice, without irrevalent inquiry as to where his knowledge was acquired.

And where the diploma, rendered difficult of acquisition by the

severity of the scientific tests alone, might become what it was originally designed to be—a legitimate certificate of unquestionable ability.

I am aware, that all action upon the powers conferred by the fifth section of our charter, must be surrounded by difficulties, and encumbered with questions, of the utmost delicacy. Time, and the most careful deliberation, would be necessary at every step.

Whether the present be the proper season for a movement in favor of a reform of the present system of medical instruction, I leave the society to decide; but in calling your attention to this subject, I have performed a simple duty, in the hope of relieving this venerable and time-honored association, from the charge of luxuriating in privileges unpaid for, or resting idle, in the midst of powers unexercised, and duties unperformed.

Let me now conclude, with an apology for the somewhat unusual character of this address. A medical life, is a life of reflection and scientific observation.

The avocations of the closet, and sick room, call us off from the details of ordinary affairs, and perhaps no class of the community, are more habitually averse to the routine of business. Prone as we are, in hours of leisure, to meditative thought, and in our more active pursuits, to recondite investigations, and abstract discussion, we too frequently become neglectful in our civic duties.—This has been my motive in quitting the beaten track, and instead of occupying your time, with a disquisition upon professional ethics, or an essay upon some practical, or theoretical questions in medical science, I have regarded the New Jersey Medical Society, rather as a civic institution, the creature of the law, established for a social purpose, than as a body of philosophers, engaged in the treatment of disease.

New Jersey has contributed her full quota of enterprise and talent, in all other departments of human affairs. The walks of mercantile life, the theatres of industrial energy, the bench—the bar—the halls of legislation, are graced on every side by bright stars from the galaxy of genius, claiming the institutions of New Jersey, as the fountain of their light, though the illumination of

their rays extend from ocean to ocean, and from the frozen plains of the north to the southern boundaries of the Anglo-Saxon race.

Has the most noble and dignified of all professions, contributed its proper share to this assemblage of distinction? Perhaps the query may admit an affirmative reply—but the medical profession of New Jersey, holds at the present moment, the power to place her in advance of all her sisters, in the march of medical reform, and if in the few remarks, which time, and the important objects of this meeting have permitted me to offer, I should elicit an initiative thought, which, in its future developements, should lead to a result so glorious, I shall feel myself in part released from the deep debt of gratitude, so justly due to the profession we delight to honor—the State of my adoption, in which I have received so many proofs of courtesy and confidence, and my fellow members of this Society, whose patient attention and kind countenance demands, as believe me, gentlemen, they heartfully receive—my warmest thanks.